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## PHILADELPHIA OBSERVATORY.

THE following ordinance of the Select and Common Councils of the City of Philadelphia, granting a large and elegant public building, in the Centre Square of this City, as an *Astronomical Observatory*, was passed in consequence of a memorial on the subject, presented by the American Philosophical Society.

This building is situated in the centre of a circular area of 520 feet in diameter, at the intersection of Market and Broad Streets, the first running east and west, 100 feet in width; the second north and south, 113 feet in breadth, so that the view towards the four cardinal points is not intercepted. It is erected on a ground plan of 60 feet square, on which is a basement story 21 feet in height, having porticos on the east and west fronts; from this basement, as a pedestal, rises a circular building or rotunda, 40 feet in diameter and 59 feet in height, pierced with sixteen windows and surmounted by a dome. This building was originally constructed to contain machinery for the introduction of water into the City, but late arrangements adopted for this purpose, have rendered this application of it unnecessary. It was designed by Mr. Latrobe, and built entirely of Pennsylvania marble. It is believed that it may be made very suitable for the object for which it is now appropriated, and the Society are at present occupied in making the necessary arrangements for this effect.

### AN ORDINANCE

*Granting to the American Philosophical Society, held at Philadelphia, for promoting Useful Knowledge, the use of certain parts of the Centre Engine House, for an Astronomical Observatory.*

SECT. I. BE it ordained and enacted by the Citizens of Philadelphia, in Select and Common Councils assembled, That the City Commissioners shall, from and immediately after the passing of this ordinance, demise and let to the American Philosophical Society, held at Philadelphia, for promoting useful knowledge, for and during the term of seven years from the execution of the said lease, for the yearly sum or rent of one dollar, to be paid at the expiration of each and every year, the herein after-mentioned parts of the building at the Centre Square, known by the name of the Centre Engine House, to be used by the Society as an Astronomical Observatory; that is to say, the south-east and north-west rooms in the basement story, together with the use of the passage between the said rooms; so much of the circular part of the said building as is above the basement story, and the roof of the said story.

**SECT. II.** Be it further ordained and enacted, That in order that the before-mentioned parts of the said building may be rendered suitable for the purposes aforesaid, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said American Philosophical Society, at the proper cost and charge of the same, to make and cause to be made the herein after described alterations in the parts of the said building, to be so as aforesaid demised and let to the said Society; that is to say, they may remove and take away any part, or the whole of the arch forming the ceiling of the south-west room in the basement story of the said building, and make and construct in the said room a stairway, leading to the roof of the said story; also to make, construct, and build upon the said roof, a flat terrace roof; *provided*, the same shall not be raised higher than the top of the lowest part of the parapet wall, as the same now is; and also to make, form and construct in the circular part of the said building a floor, which shall be upon a level, or as nearly so as may be, with the before-mentioned terrace roof.

*Provided always*, That the said alterations, or any of them, shall not in any manner whatever change the present external appearance of the said Centre Engine House; *and also*, that the demised parts of the same shall, during the term for which they shall be in the occupancy of the said Society, be kept and maintained in repair at the proper cost and charge of said Society.

Enacted into an Ordinance at the city of Philadelphia, this twenty-sixth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventeen.

JAMES S. SMITH,  
*President of the Common Council.*

ROBERT WALN,  
*President of the Select Council.*

JOHN C. LOWBER,  
*Clerk of the Common Council.*

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*Hall of the Society, 9th Jan. 1818.*

AT a meeting of the American Philosophical Society, held at Philadelphia, for promoting useful knowledge, this day specially convened, it was

**RESOLVED**, That the Society feel a high sense of the liberality of the City Councils in the grant which they have made of the building in the Centre Square for an Astronomical Observatory, and that the president, Caspar Wistar, be directed to present to the Councils the sincere acknowledgments of the Society for the aid which they have thus afforded to the advancement of science.

True extract from the minutes.

R. M. PATTERSON, *Secretary.*